

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Expanding Melbourne's Free Tram Zone

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## **SUBMISSION CONTENT:**

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### **1. The Free Tram Zone.**

The introduction of the Free Tram Zone has had severe negative consequences. It has dramatically increased overcrowding on trams within the zone; people who used to walk a few short blocks through the CBD now catch the trams instead. It has not reduced car traffic, and indeed may well have increased it - there are businesses which advertise parking lots on the FTZ's edge, encouraging people to drive to the edge of the city and use the free tram from there.

This means trams often are too full to board, which means that people who are travelling beyond the FTZ to the suburbs cannot actually get on the tram. Expanding the FTZ would only exacerbate these issues. It should instead be eliminated.

It is very important to note that people from the suburbs (and from regional towns and cities) who travel into the city by public transport do not get any benefit from the FTZ, because they have already paid for a Zone 1 fare by travelling in. The only thing these people get from the FTZ are the negatives - the overcrowding they receive. Politically speaking, suburban and regional voters would only benefit if the FTZ were removed.

A large part of the rationale for introducing the FTZ in the first place was to mitigate the need for tourists to buy a myki card. This was partly due to the lack of short-term tickets, and therefore the fixed cost of purchasing the physical long-term card; and partly due to the inability to buy mykis on trams themselves. These issues have to some extent been alleviated by the increased presence of myki machines at platform stops, myki availability at stores within the CBD, and the introduction of mobile myki on Android. When mobile myki is rolled out on iPhone, this would mean the vast majority of mobile devices were covered, and many opportunities to buy a physical card would exist, therefore this would be the best time to abolish the FTZ.

### **4. New technologies to improve the performance of the network**

The most important technological improvement that could be made to improve the performance of the tram network would be the provision of traffic light priority. Currently the tram network has a lot of issues with travel speeds and punctuality; providing traffic light priority would make a huge difference to both of these. It makes sense to prioritise the mode of transport that moves the most people most efficiently, especially since in most cases this

would only mildly inconvenience a relatively small number of motorists.

Rollout could be prioritised on intersections that serve multiple tram routes, and also by picking individual high-patronage routes (particularly those like route 96 which have large off-road sections already) to turn them into proper high-speed light rail lines.

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File1:

File2:

File3: